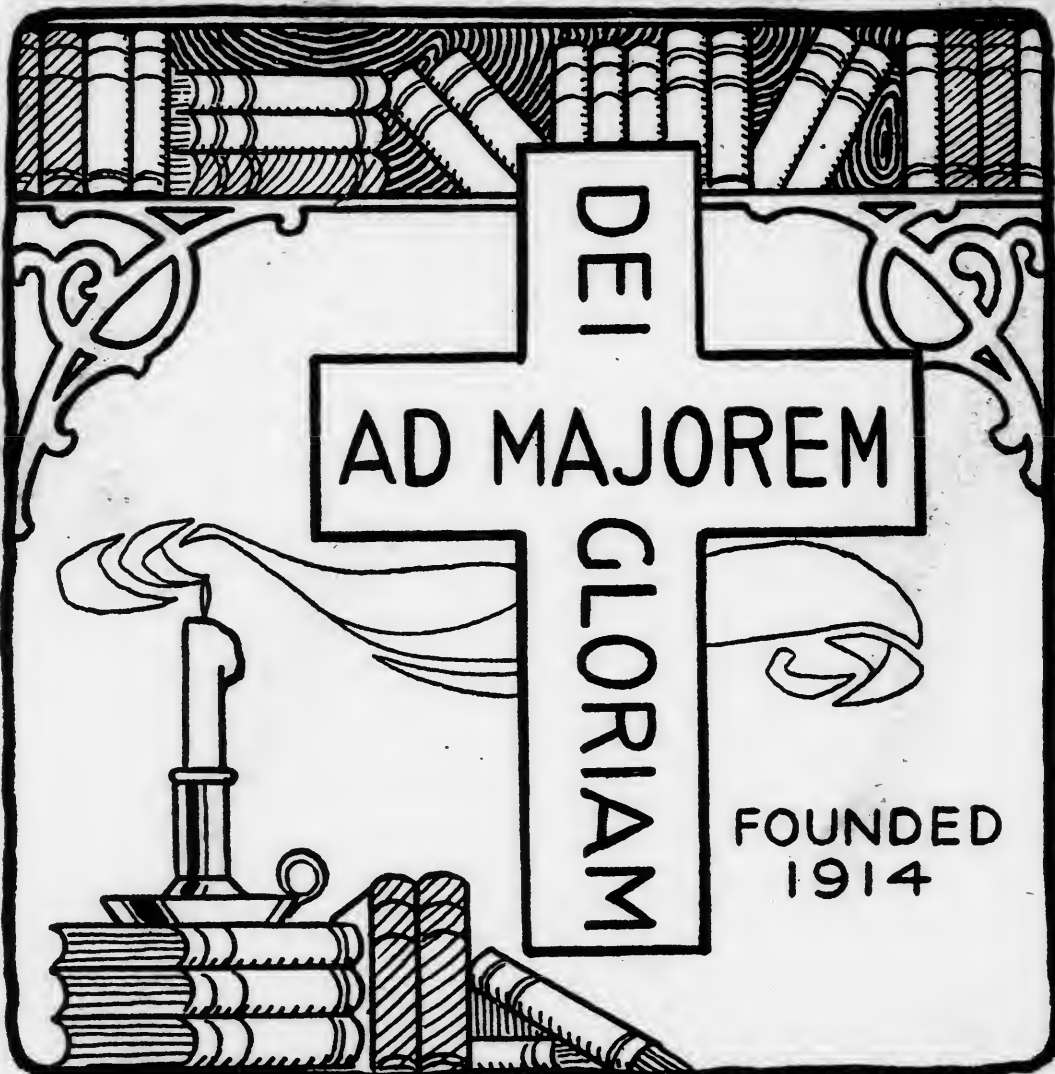


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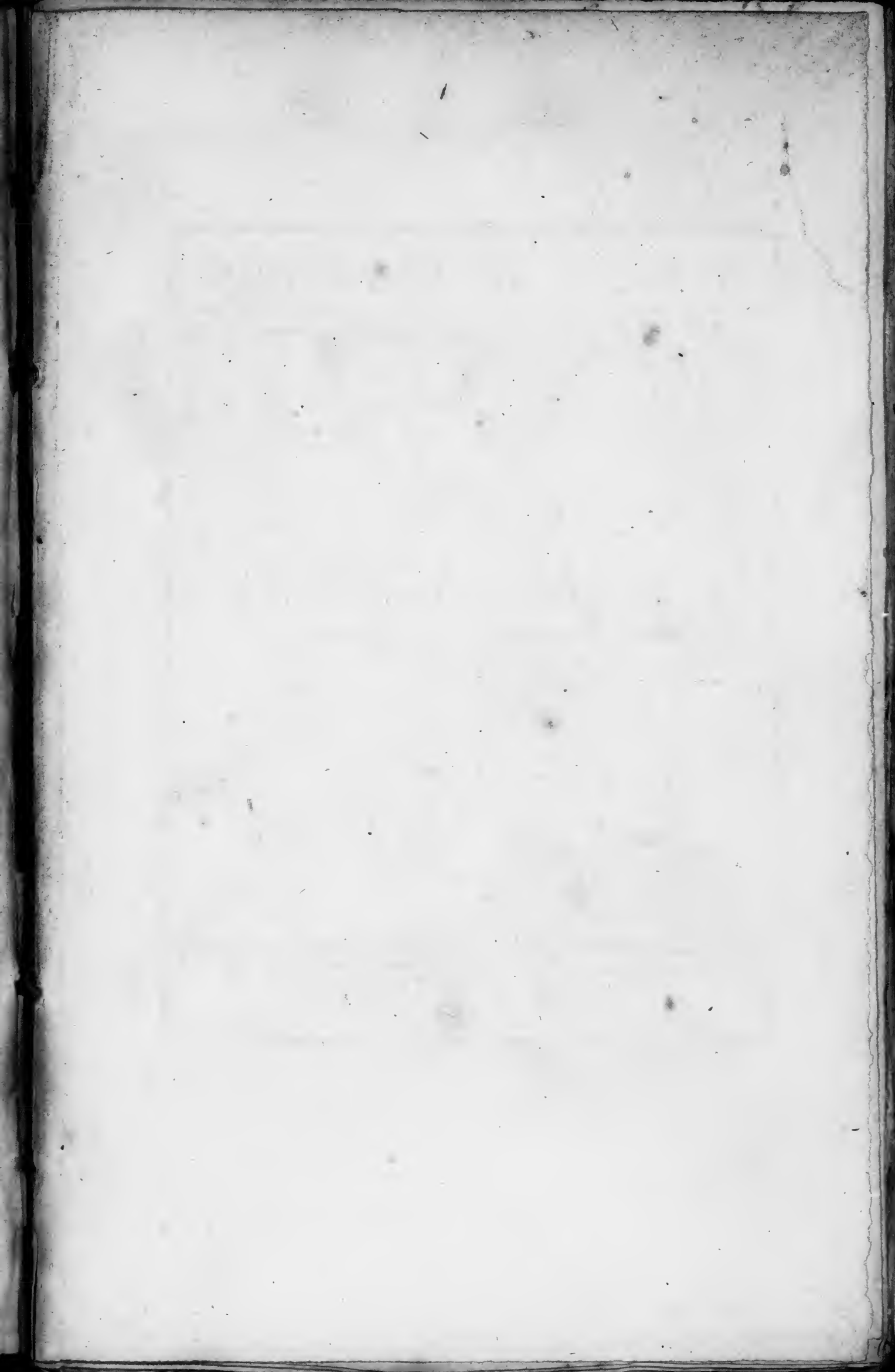
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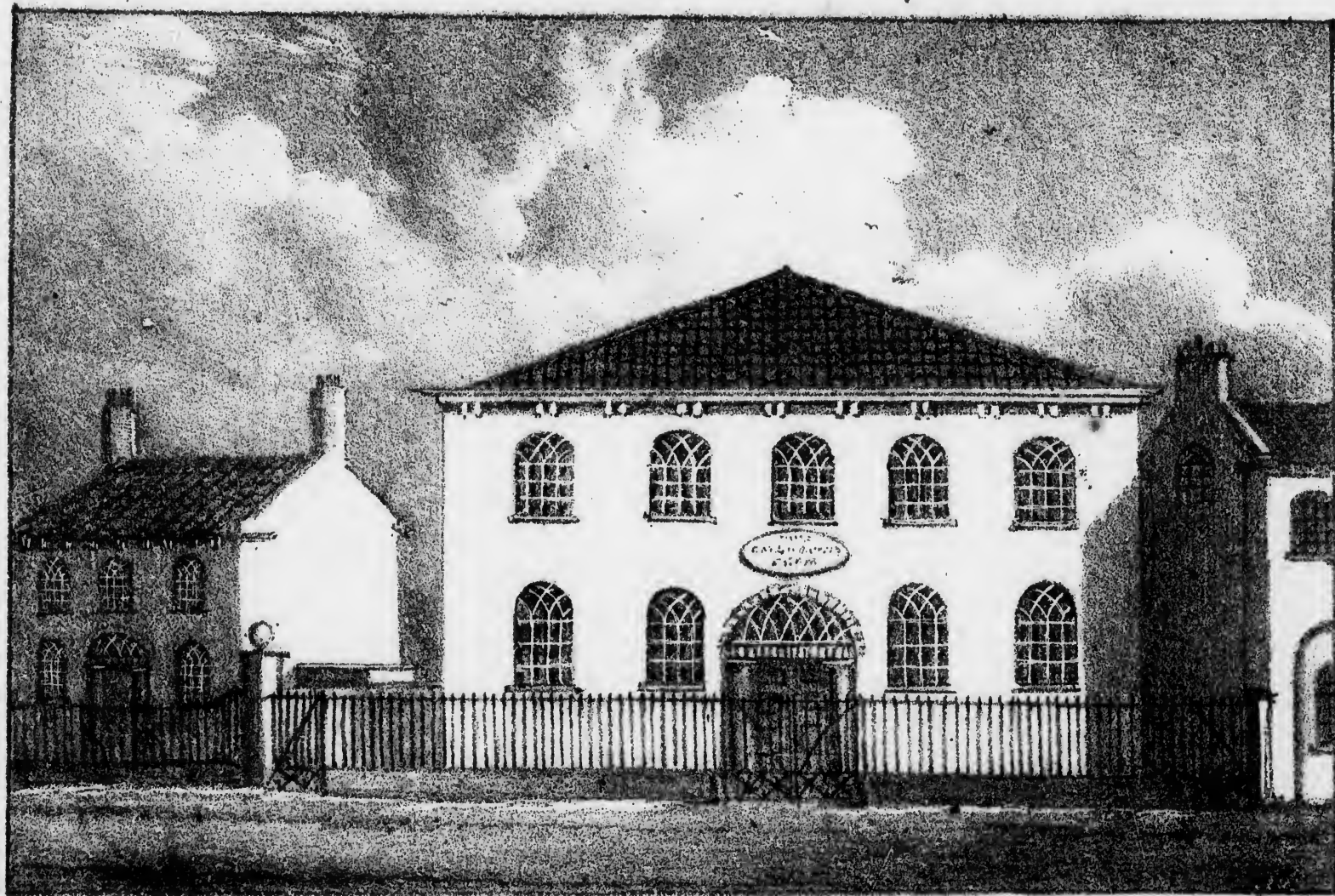


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A
CONCISE HISTORY
OF THE
FIRST ESTABLISHMENT
OF
WESLEYAN METHODISM
IN THE
CITY OF NORWICH,

IN THE YEAR 1754,

WITH ITS

Progress from that period to its Present State.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An Address to the Junior Members of the Society.

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

Containing an Epitome of its Doctrines and Discipline.

BY

W. LORKIN.

“Remember them who have *had* the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow.”

PAUL.

NORWICH:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY MATCHETT AND STEVENSON, MARKET-
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DEDICATION.

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM GILPIN.

SIR,

It is very well known how much Methodism in the city of Norwich is indebted, under Providence, to your indefatigable labours; and it being the professed design of this work to present a History of Methodism in this city, it would be difficult to find out so proper a Patron for it as yourself.

In dedicating this work to you, my object is simply to testify the sense I entertain of your invaluable exertions, and at the same time to congratulate you on the accomplishment of your great undertakings, and beg you will accept this pure tribute of affection and gratitude which I now render to you before the world.

And that the Author and Giver of all good, when he shall in his due time remove you from your sphere of usefulness, may place you in that mansion of bliss and immortality, which he has prepared for all them that love him, is the fervent prayer of,

Dear SIR,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

WILLIAM LORKIN.

Norwich, Oct. 1825.

It is very well known that
the study of the history of the
United States is a very important
and interesting subject. It is
a subject which is of great
importance to the people of
this country. It is a subject
which is of great interest to
all of us.

In studying this work to you, my report is
simply to say that the work is of great
value to the people of this country. It is
a work which is of great interest to
all of us. It is a work which is of
great importance to the people of
this country. It is a work which is
of great interest to all of us.

And that is the reason why I am
writing this report to you. I am
writing this report to you because
I believe that this work is of great
value to the people of this country.
I believe that this work is of great
interest to all of us. I believe that
this work is of great importance to
the people of this country.

Very truly yours,
J. Edgar Hoover
Director

Enclosure

PREFACE.

A short and authentic account of the commencement and growth of the Cause of God, among the Wesleyan Methodists in the city of Norwich, has long been earnestly desired by many respectable individuals of that communion.

The Author being one of the oldest Members of that Society, and having paid some attention to many of the most remarkable events which have occurred during the lapse of more than half a century, (in which he has been in connexion with that people) has been repeatedly requested to draw up and arrange such a Narrative from the various documents in his possession. It is however principally from the ardent affection which he feels for the younger Members of the Society, and for the Chil-

dren of those who have long been ornaments to the Christian profession, and with a view to promote their present and eternal happiness, that he has at length yielded to the solicitations of his friends.

The materials employed in compiling the following sheets were derived, partly from the Author's personal knowledge of the different occurrences which have taken place, and partly from his intimate acquaintance with many of the original Members of the Society. He has conscientiously avoided inserting any thing on mere hear-say; and has recorded nothing but what is founded upon truth. Occasionally he has noticed some of the numerous persecutions which many excellent individuals endured, both from the malevolence of the openly profane, and from the violence and folly of unsound professors; and in some instances has adverted to the deleterious influence of the pernicious tenets of the Antinomians and the Sandemanians, which, in the infancy of Methodism, so much prevailed in this city. He has also introduced into the narrative a few short anecdotes of several of the Preachers who laboured amongst us. The Author has closed this sketch with a short Address to the Junior Members of the Society: conscious as he is of the

numerous errors and imperfections with which it abounds, yet he trusts it will be profitable to some. To which is subjoined an Appendix containing an outline of the leading doctrines which are believed and taught by the Methodists, with an abstract of some of the principal branches of our Church Discipline, both of which by the sacred benediction of Almighty God, have been made subservient to the best interests and salvation of tens of thousands in this, and in other countries, during the space of almost an hundred years.

Norwich, Oct. 1825.

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 Church Discipline, both of a civil and of a
 religious nature, showing God, how far we must
 attain to the best interests and salvation of those of
 thousands in this, and in other countries, during the
 space of almost an hundred years.

London, Oct. 1755.

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ERRATA.

Page 7 line 6 for *Enock* read *Enoch*

— 11 line 5 for *the* read *that*

— 24 line 16 for *Keithley* read *Keighley*.

— 25 line 3 for 1788 read 1787

— 32 line 1 for *eighty-eight* read *eighty-eighth*

— 48 last line for *immerge* read *emerge*

— 49 line 14 for *strickingly* read *strikingly*.

on Sunday the 16. the Rev John Wesley Wesley.
will be in this City (God willing) and preach at
a black in the West. at the Fountains Hall till
Mercury. Mar 1759 also an advertisement in Aug
1759

*The arrival of the Rev. John and Charles
Wesley in this City.*

THESE two eminent Servants of God, who in their ardent zeal to promote the revival, and spread of vital evangelical religion in the world, had travelled through the greater part of this country, preaching with unparalleled success, the Gospel of God our Saviour to perishing thousands, paid their first visit to this ancient city, in the beginning of July, 1754.[†] At that time they were unknown here, except to a Gentleman belonging to the Army, who resided at Lakenham, a small village adjoining this city, and who kindly and hospitably entertained them at his house.

It was in that place where the Rev. Charles Wesley preached the first Methodist Sermon which was ever heard in this neighbourhood. Mr. John Wesley was then incapable of public duty; being, it was believed, far advanced in a deep decline.

B

† on Thursday last the Rev. Mr John Wesley arrived here from London - He preaches near the Foundry at the market place every morning at 5. and every last at 7. where may be had his notes to D Taylors "Scripture Doctrine of Orig Sin. free bands"

6 Hullings. Mercury Nov. 1754.

Their visit however, was not without effect, for some were convinced of the truth, and in a short time a small Society was formed of the people who had been brought to the Knowledge of God, under the Wesleyan Ministry. Immediately after, Mr. Samuel Larwood, one of the first itinerant preachers was sent to Norwich, to forward the good work which had been begun and to preach the gospel wherever he could obtain an opening. In the following year Mr. J. Wesley, having almost miraculously recovered his health, again visited this city, and preached his first sermon, on the first day of July, 1755, at a place called the Foundry, near Orford Hill. He continued about a fortnight preaching every day, at five o'clock in the morning and at seven in the evening. During which period, that *Great Man* occupied a small and humble cottage* adjoining

* Contiguous to this Cottage formerly stood the Mansion where *that truly great* and learned man Sir Thomas Browne, Knt. M. D. lived and died; he received the honor of Knighthood from Charles the Second, when the King visited Norwich in the year 1671. Simpson mentions him with the great Pascal and other champions in the Cause of Christianity. He was the Author of the "Religio Medici," "Hydristaphia," "Vulgar

the Foundry, and there he wrote part of his valuable and unanswerable book on "Original Sin," in reply to the celebrated and amiable Dr. Taylor.

In the year 1756, Mr. Thos. Olivers was appointed by Mr. Wesley for Norwich; he was a man of considerable talent, and through his instrumentality many were awakened and brought to a saving knowledge of the "truth as it is in Jesus." It may be justly said of him, he was a "Boanerges, a son of thunder." He afterwards travelled in various parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland, where his labours were generally attended with success. Latterly he settled in London, where he died, far advanced in years. He wrote several controversial books in defence of the Doctrines of Methodism, which are allowed, even by his adversaries, to possess considerable merit. Mr. O. was born at Tregonan, in the principality of Wales, in 1725. According to his own account of his life, in his youth, he was given to all kinds of wickedness, and would fre-

Errors," &c. &c. His remains were interred beneath a monument on the south side of the Church of St. Peter's Mancroft, in this city.

quently distinguish himself among his vile associates, by combining twenty or thirty words, to form a long and horrid oath. Being obliged to leave his native place, he went to Bristol, and there, whilst in his career of sin, curiosity led him to hear the Rev. Geo. Whitfield, who preached from the following text, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" Under which sermon he was awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger, and reclaimed from the error of his ways. Mr. O. was the first person that visited Yarmouth as a Methodist Preacher.

In the year 1757, Mr. Thos. Walsh was appointed for Norwich. He had been educated for a Romish Priest, but was convinced of the errors of that superstition, and savingly converted to God. Mr. Walsh was a man of profound learning and of eminent piety, zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. Never was he more in his element than when watching over his little flock, or preaching the word of life; and his efforts to do good "in season and out of season" were greatly owned of God and blessed to the people. Being a man of learning and refined manners he found his way into the higher ranks

of society, and frequently with the Clergy and others, was engaged in controversies in defence of the great truths of Christianity.

About this time a violent persecution was raised against the Society by a set of wicked and foolish men, who called themselves "The Hell-Fire Club;" yet notwithstanding the danger with which they were surrounded, the Members of the Society still continued to attend the meetings for divine worship, though at the utmost hazard of their lives. Some of those pious people have told me that no danger could then deter them from assembling themselves in the name of the Lord; and in the simplicity and sincerity of their hearts they would unite and sing

Who in Jesus confide, who are bold to outride

The storms of affliction beneath,

With the Prophets we soar to the heavenly shore

And out-fly all the arrows of death.

Who on earth can conceive how happy we live

In the presence of God the great king?

What a concert of praise when our Jesus' grace

The whole heavenly company sing! *

* The singing of the original Methodists when the men and women took their separate parts, and accompanied with that

To promote a revival of genuine Methodism in these perilous times, Mr. Nicholas Gilbert* was sent to Norwich. He was a man devoted to God and greatly beloved by the people, he went from house to house to sympathize with, and comfort the little persecuted flock. He had no lucrative motive in view, for he not only "went about doing good" but cheerfully sacrificed a life of ease and affluence to participate in the afflictions of God's people. He knew how "to rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep." During the time that Mr. G. was here, a few were added to the Society, and the cause of truth continued to gain ground among the people. He now rests from all his toil in the Kingdom of God.

simplicity and fervour for which they were noted, was exceedingly attractive; and it may with some degree of propriety be said that whilst the glorified spirits were singing "the Lamb in hymns above," they were reiterating the same "in hymns below," though in strains more humble.

* This gentleman was brother to the late excellent and pious Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq. Speaker of the House of Assembly in the Island of Antigua, who first encouraged and more firmly established the highly successful Methodist Missions among the slave population of that Island.

The following are the names of the Preachers at the Foundry:—

1755, Samuel Larwood, John Houghton, and Thomas Olivers.

1756, Thos. Hanby, Wm. Roberts, John Murlin, Enock Williams, and J. Hampson.

1757, Thos. Walsh, John Turner, John Fenwick, John Davey, Thomas Mitchell, and L. Coughlan.

At that time the Preachers changed every two months, extending their labours over the greater part of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.

1758, John Manners, Nicholas Gilbert, and James Kershaw.

They now changed once in four months. These excellent and laborious servants of the Lord, whose names are here recorded, and of whom the world was not worthy, have long since entered into their great and eternal reward.

The removal of the Methodist Preachers and Society from the Foundry to the Tabernacle.

It will be here necessary to mention some particulars relative to the notorious James Wheatley, concerning whom, I am constrained to believe, it

had been good for many of the inhabitants of this city, if that wretched man had never been born. He was expelled from the Methodist Connexion about the year 1749, for gross immorality. His character as a preacher, will be delineated with sufficient clearness and precision, by the following extract, which I have taken from Mr. Wesley's letter "On Preaching Christ," in the Arminian Magazine of 1779, page 313. "In this manner did the Methodist Preachers preach, till J. Wh——ley came among them: he was never clear, nor perhaps sound in the faith. According to his understanding so was his preaching; an unconnected rhapsody of unmeaning words, like Sir John Suckling's verses.

"Smooth, and soft as cream,

"In which was neither depth nor stream."

The manner in which the inhabitants of this city were at that time disposed to regard and receive the words of eternal life, even at the hands of that bad man, may easily be conceived from the following account, the substance of which is taken from a work published in the year 1752.

"About the beginning of the year 1751, a most remarkable reformation took place among the in-

habitants of the city of Norwich, by the preaching of Mr. J. Wheatley, insomuch that, amongst the most notorious for all kinds of vice and immorality, many thousands attended the ministry of God's word, and two thousand two hundred gave in their names as candidates for Christian Society, with a view to seek the Salvation of their Souls. A spirit of seriousness was manifest throughout every part of the city. The Public Newspapers of that time state that where formerly nothing but blaspheming the name of God resounded in the streets, now seldom an oath or a profane expression was any where to be heard. This great reformation continued for some months, and in all probability would have continued much longer, had it not been for a certain set of dissolute and disaffected persons who called themselves "The Hell-Fire Club," who employed all their power and influence for its suppression.

Here I shall give a short account of that horrid and infamous association. It consisted of a number of gentlemen (so called) who assumed that appalling appellation; some of them were Papists, some Jacobites, and others Nonjurors, all of them in their political principles disaffected to the Govern-

ment of the Country. They regarded the Methodists as a loyal people from the beginning, and they were therefore the more determined to do all in their power to crush and destroy them. That lawless fraternity met at the Blue Bell on Orford Hill; and it was their custom after regaling themselves and singing their treasonable songs, to collect large sums of money and distribute it among the mob. The depredations which were committed, and the terror to which it put the peaceable inhabitants for a time, was equalled by none, except the Riot at Cork, to the lasting reproach of some of the Magistrates of this city (whose names I forbear to mention) who were found giving countenance and encouragement to those workers of iniquity. A fuller account of these transactions may be seen in the Public Journals of that year.

After the state of things had become more tranquil, and the persecution in a great measure subsided, the character of Wheatley began to discover itself in its true colours; he was not only a fraudulent man, but also a slave to licentiousness to an extraordinary degree. He was at length prosecuted for an unlawful intrigue with a Miss T.

and in consequence of the severe sentence of the Court, he was obliged to leave the city. After Wheatley's disgrace and banishment, the Tabernacle near Bishopgate became vacant, and application was made to Mr. Wesley to occupy the place and supply it with his Preachers. Mr. Wesley, who acted from the purest motives, but contrary to the advice of his friends, agreed to hire the Chapel for the term of seven years, and engaged to pay a rent of 50*l.* per annum, with a solemn promise on the part of Wheatley, that the common contributions should be applied to the general support of the cause. It is however well known that he privately received the money himself, and thus the weight of pecuniary affairs fell on Mr. Wesley and a few of the people who went with him.

Mr. Wesley preached his first sermon in the Tabernacle, at the close of the year 1759, and although several of Wheatley's people had entered into a solemn vow never to allow him to ascend that pulpit; when the time arrived, and Mr. Wesley made his appearance, their courage failed them, they made a kind of avenue through the crowd, and he passed without molestation.—See *Mr. Wesley's Journal for that year.*

In the year 1760, Mr. Paul Greenwood and Mr. James Glazebrook were appointed to labour in the Norwich Circuit. They were two holy and faithful men; but they soon found that those people whom Wheatley had been accustomed cantingly to call "his dear hearers and his dear lambs," were more like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke. As to any thing resembling church discipline, it was altogether unknown among them, and many of them were practical Antinomians, declaring that Christ had done every thing and that they were to do nothing. Here it will be proper to observe, that Wheatley's vile conduct had given such general offence and excited such disgust, that almost all the people of any degree of respectability had withdrawn themselves from the place.*

*The mob at one time made an Effigy of a Preacher, which they carried about in derision, and afterwards burnt it in the parish of St. Augustine's, where they committed many wanton outrages. At that juncture Mr. Henry Gurney (one of the Society of Friends) kindly interposed, and addressed the rude and riotous multitude, with such effect, that their madness was immediately softened and subdued.

But notwithstanding the extremely unpropitious aspect which every thing assumed at this gloomy period, the Lord stood by his servants, and graciously prospered the work of their hands. Some were truly awakened, and others received the the Knowledge of Salvation by the remission of sins. Among those who were brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, was Mr. R. Robinson, afterwards Pastor of a Congregation of Particular Baptists in Cambridge, and under whose ministry the Rev. David Simpson, of Macclesfield, (then a Student in that University) was awakened and converted. Mr. Robinson was the Author of several learned works; amongst the best of which may be classed his "History on Baptism." Before his death, it is to be lamented, he fell into the errors of Arianism.

In the years 1762, Mr. John Pawson was appointed for the Norwich Circuit. He was a man of extraordinary devotedness to God, of great talents as a preacher, and his labours were much blessed among the people. An interesting account of the life of this holy man may be found in the Arminian Magazine, for the year 1779. At that time there was much real good done by the

preaching of the pure doctrines of eternal truth; but unhappily a man of the name of Cudworth came to Norwich, who began to disseminate the pernicious notions of Sandeman, telling the people that a mere assent of the mind to the truth of the Scriptures was all required of mankind in order to Salvation. He was an artful and crafty man of rather an insinuating address, and it was his constant practice on the Sabbath Day, as soon as the Preachers had concluded the public service, to ascend the pulpit, and with all the sophistry of which he was master, he would attempt to refute all that had been delivered.

For a further account of Methodism at the Tabernacle, *see the Journals of Mr. Wesley.*

The following are the names of the Preachers at the Tabernacle:—

1760, Paul Greenwood and James Glazebrook.

1761, Thomas Ansel and Isaac Brown.

1762, John Pawson and Daniel Bumstead.

1763, Paul Greenwood and John Pawson.

1764, John Oliver and John Murlin.

1765, John Easton and James Clough.

1766, Thomas Hanson.

1767, William Minethorpe.

The removal of the Methodist Preachers & Society from the Tabernacle to the Priory in St. James'.

The term of years for which the Tabernacle had been engaged having now expired, and it being thought advisable to continue there no longer, arrangements were therefore made for the Society and Congregation in future to occupy a small Chapel belonging to the General Baptists, called the Priory, situate in the parish of St. James'.

In the year 1767, Mr. Benjamin Rhodes was appointed to labour in Norwich. He was a young man of sterling piety and of the most amiable manners; full of ardent zeal and love; his labours to promote the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls were indefatigable; in the discharge of the duties of his office he met with manifold interruptions from the Antimonians and Sandemanians, who left no means untried to propagate their destructive principles.

Mr. Rhodes was succeeded by Mr. Thos. Janes, who was allowed by competent judges, to be one of the most eloquent preachers who had ever been in Norwich. Multitudes attended his ministry, and were enraptured by the fascinating powers of

his elocution. He occasionally delivered lectures on various branches of science, which were heard with attention and pleasure by many people of the first respectability. It does not however appear that much real and lasting good was done through his instrumentality, except in the case of a most abandoned youth whom he visited, and who was executed on the Castle Hill, in the eighteenth year of his age.

In the year 1768, Mr. Duncan Wright and Mr. Mc Nab were appointed for this Circuit. Mr. W. was a man of deep humility, of uncommon gravity and steadiness, and a faithful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord: he died in the year 1791, leaving a blessed testimony behind him. Mr. Mc Nab stood high in the esteem of the people, as a young man full of ardent affection and of winning address, and under his ministry the work of the Lord prospered amidst great persecution and reproach. He afterwards left the Methodist Connexion and became Pastor of a small congregation in Sheffield.

About fifteen years had now elapsed since Messrs. John and Charles Wesley first visited this city; during which period, the Methodist Preachers

had been most zealously and laboriously employed in calling sinners to repentance, and in building up believers on their most holy faith : and Mr. John Wesley generally paid us a visit once a year. But hitherto the Methodists had obtained no settled place of worship of their own. They moved from place to place, as Divine Providence had opened their way ; and wherever they went and with whatever opposition they met, they had the satisfaction of seeing that good was done ; they had been the means of enlightening many, and multitudes were turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; and the Society increased both in number and in strength. They began at that time seriously to entertain thoughts of erecting a Chapel for themselves ; but an insurmountable obstacle soon occurred to discourage them, which before had not been contemplated. The reproach which had been brought on the cause of religion by the base conduct of Wheatley, still however unjustly, attached itself to the Methodists ; and so great was the general prejudice which then influenced the minds of the people, that after repeated applications no one would sell them a piece of ground ; but at that trying juncture, the

hand of Providence graciously interposed, and raised up a friend in the late Mr. Perowne, who procured for them a suitable situation. Mr. Wesley, who always expressed a special regard for the people at Norwich, sent them the sum of two hundred pounds, to enable them to proceed in the building of the Chapel, and afterwards added seventy pounds more. The house was immediately begun in Cherry-lane, in the parish of St. George's Colegate. The first stone was laid by Mr. D. Wright, in the beginning of the year 1769, and the gladness and gratitude of the Members of the Society and other friends, were indescribably great on that joyful event, when they saw themselves about to become a settled and permanent church.

The removal of the Methodist Preachers & Society from the Priory to Cherry Lane Chapel.

The building of the New Chapel proceeded rapidly, and in October the same year, it was opened for Divine Service by Mr. Wesley; who on that occasion took for his text those solemn words of our Lord, "Where their worm dieth not,

and the fire is not quenched." Soon after Mr. John Murlin paid a visit to Norwich, and continued for some time. That holy and affectionate man was generally known by the appellation of the "Weeping Prophet"; for such was the extraordinary degree of compassion which he felt for the miseries and danger of sinners, and such was his tender sympathy for the afflicted, that whenever he addressed himself to the people, or to God in prayer, the tears flowed copiously down his cheeks, and he wept aloud. During the time Mr. Murlin was here, that eminent servant of God, the Rev. Geo. Whitfield died at Newbery, near Boston, in North America, and on that solemn occasion Mr. M. delivered a funeral sermon, which by the eloquence of his tears and the fervor of his address, produced an overwhelming effect on the minds of his audience. The labors of that good man were peculiarly useful in promoting unity and love among the members of the Society, which at that time amounted to about 160 in number. Still they continued to be harassed and persecuted by the Antinomians, who never failed to hover around them like birds of prey, and who had recourse to the most cunning

and sagacious artifices to deceive and torment the people. At one time when Mr. Prichard was enforcing the obligations christian believers were under, to observe and obey all the sacred precepts of the Son of God, a man of the name of Sharpe, sprang up from his seat, and left the Chapel in a rage, exclaiming "that it was a damnable doctrine that had been hatched in Hell."

The Checks of the Rev. John Fletcher which had been recently published, were read with great attention by many, and certainly they had a most happy effect in arresting the dangerous progress of the demoralising doctrines of Antinomianism. The members of the Society were generally poor, as to their temporal circumstances, but they loved like brethren and lived like christians. At this moment I reflect with satisfaction and delight on those happy days and refreshing seasons, when the blessings of heaven descended upon us, "as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." When the preachers of those days met the Society, we were like a family of love, where peace and harmony reigned in every heart. It is most pleasing

to think of the many who have since been brought to the same state of mind.

to recollect at this day, that it was from that "little Hill of Zion," that the sacred rays of celestial light which have since diffused their divine radiancy over the greater part of Norfolk and Suffolk first emanated.

But the grand adversary of God and man, could not long remain an indifferent spectator of that prosperity which then prevailed in the Church of Christ, nor of those incursions which were made upon his own kingdom. He soon found the means to infuse the spirit of discord and delusion into the minds of some of the leading members of the Society, who had unhappily imbibed poisonous notions, and became most bigotted and furious Antinomians, and who endeavoured by every possible effort to disunite both people and preachers. They represented the preachers as legalists, who kept the people in the dark, whilst as for themselves their eyes were now opened: a common kind of low cant among self-conceited and weak-minded people, when they turn aside from the paths of righteousness and truth. A few of the feeble were drawn away by that mischievous faction, but the members of the Society remained "stedfast and unmoveable, abounding in

the work of the Lord." That grievous rent had so much diminished the congregation that the public contributions amounted to no more than about four shillings per week; and so embarrassed were our finances, that it was feared we should no longer be able to support the cause, and that the doors of the chapel must be closed. But God

"Who moves in a mysterious way

His wonders to perform"—

and who is rich in mercy to all them that call upon him, heard our cry, and in that gloomy season was unto us as a "pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night."

At the conference of 1777, Mr. Joseph (now Dr.) Pilmore, at his own particular desire, though an entire stranger to us, and though he had the offer of the first circuits in the connexion, was appointed for the Norwich Circuit. He was a man of ardent zeal, of a vast grasp of intellect, and of uncommon eloquence.

The chapel was soon filled again, great numbers of respectable people took pews, and many of whom have since told me that they date their spiritual existence from that memorable period. Many

were then savingly converted to God, and joined the Society and a few of them remain steady members to this day.

Mr. Pilmore continued with us two years,* and was succeeded by Mr. George Shadford, in the year 1779, who was a most alarming preacher and mighty in prayer, and whose labours were generally useful and acceptable to the people.

One instance of the fruit of his ministry (which I well remember) was a man of a most infamous character, noted for his extreme wickedness, who from mere curiosity went to hear Mr. S.; he was deeply convinced of his sin and danger, and soundly converted. Some short time after he was taken ill, and died happy in the love and favour

* Mr. Pilmore afterwards went to America, where he obtained the highest Ecclesiastical Preferment, and where, I am happy to hear, he is still alive, in the enjoyment of the esteem of his people, and I trust in the approval of his God. A few years ago I had the honour of receiving a letter from that valuable man, in which he warmly expressed his unabated attachment for his Norwich friends, and the pleasure he should feel in crossing the Atlantic to preach to us again. He was the instrument in the hand of the Lord of raising the Society to such circumstances, that when he left us, we were able to bear our own expences.

of God ! Upon his death-bed he earnestly requested that Mr. Shadford would preach a sermon on the occasion, in the yard where he lived ; that all his wicked companions might be instructed in the way of everlasting life.

At the Conference of 1780, Mr. James Wood was appointed for this Circuit, which was the second time we were favored with the labours of this gracious servant of the Lord. He commenced his labours amongst us in the year 1773, and it is with great pleasure I add, he is still an efficient Minister of the Gospel, though he has now entered upon the fifty-third year of his Christian Ministry.

Mr. W. remained with us two years, and was succeeded in the year 1782, by Mr. T. Hindmarsh, Mr. Thomas Cooper, Mr. Joshua Keighley, and Mr. R. Scott. Mr. K. was a young man of great piety and zeal, and like young Timothy "he had known the Holy Scriptures from a Child." His delight both in public and in private, was to set forth the love of God in Christ Jesus to a fallen world. Many happy Sabbaths did we then enjoy under the ministry of the Word. We did indeed "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and experienced the joyful anticipations of the felicities of a glorious immortality.

Mr. K. died in the midst of his usefulness, full of the assurance of the divine favor, in the north of Scotland, 1788.

The account published of his triumphant end, by Mr. James Grey, in the *Arminian Magazine* about that time, contains a most extraordinary circumstance that occurred on his journey to the north, which he regarded as a certain prediction of his speedy removal from time into eternity, and which in a few months after was fully verified.*

In August, 1783, Mr. Richard Whatecoat was appointed to the Norwich Circuit, and was made an especial blessing to many—he was “an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile;” such profound and amiable piety I remember never to

*The following is an extract from Mr. Grey’s account, dated Elgin, Aug. 24th, 1787.

“When he was at Inverness last spring, he dreamed that he was condemned to die on the morrow. However he obtained leave of the Judge to go and acquaint his Father of his fate, and to prepare him for the shock; which as soon as he had done, the Judge appeared to him again, and said, “I have got you a short respite; but depend upon it you shall die in Scotland.”

“How unaccountable is this on the Infidel and Sadducean supposition! But how plain on that of a Christian!”—See *Arminian Magazine* for March, 1788.

have witnessed in any man! He laboured among us with success; and some years after went to America, where he became eminently useful, and where he closed his life, and his labours in the service of his Lord, in the blooming hope of everlasting life.

The same year Mr. (now Dr.) Adam Clarke was appointed to this place; and, even at that early period of his career, he exhibited specimens of that mighty genius, which has since burst forth with so much splendour upon the world!

While he was with us he wrote an Answer to the Rev. Mr. Lemon's Remarks on Enthusiasm.

The Society now enjoyed internal tranquillity and peace, and the members were united together in the bond of real Christian affection, but being still greatly despised and held in derision, few individuals joined the Society, except such as were under the influence of a strong desire to save their souls. Still we were pursued, and assailed on every hand by our Sandemanian foes; and about that time a Rev. Mr. N. a dissenting preacher of some note, who had recently embraced those notions, and was a warm disciple

of Sandeman, would seize every opportunity of entering into disputes with many of our good but illiterate people, on the subject of their Christian experience. His grand object was to perplex and entangle them, and he would always avail himself of any unguarded expression which they might employ to triumph over and to deride them.

In the year 1785, Mr. Thomas Wride was appointed for our Circuit, and happy had it been for the Society and congregation, if he had never come amongst us. He was no doubt, a man of considerable genius; but unhappily indulged himself in eccentricities of the most ludicrous description—both in and out of the pulpit. This alone would have been amply sufficient to hinder the usefulness, and bring into contempt the greatest preacher that ever lived; but many other parts of his conduct gave great and just offence to some respectable individuals belonging to the congregation; and the results were, destructive disputes, rancour, and animosity, which had nearly rent the Society in pieces. In order to repair these injuries, Mr. Wesley sent Dr. Coke, who was the instrument in the hands of Providence, of restoring good order and peace.

In the year 1787, Mr. John Roberts died in this city. He had for many years been fully convinced that God had called him to preach the Gospel, but he delayed from time to time, till at length conscience prevailed over all other considerations. But after labouring a few months he fell into a lingering illness, from which he never recovered. For some weeks his mind was in utter darkness; at length God scattered the clouds—and gave him to depart in peace. This being the first preacher, who had died among us, the general effect which it produced was solemn and salutary. Messrs. J. Poole, R. Reece, and J. Kelk, were the preachers whom the Conference appointed to labour in the Norwich Circuit, for the year 1788. An appointment which gave satisfaction to the Society and congregation, and during that year, the Lord graciously prospered his work in the hands of the people.

The Death of the Rev. Chas. Wesley, A. M.

In presenting a History of Methodism in Norwich, it would be a species of injustice to omit noticing the character and death of Mr. Charles

Wesley, as he preached the first Methodist Sermon that was ever heard in this city; and several times afterwards visited the persecuted flock at the Foundry.

He like our venerable Founder, never appeared in his proper element, but when "going about doing good," it was his chief, his only delight!

Dr. Clarke in his Memoirs of the Wesley family says, "he was a good man, a powerful preacher, and the best Christian Poet in reference to Hymnology that has flourished in either ancient or modern times," and the celebrated Dr. Watts did not scruple to say that—that single Poem "Wrestling Jacob," was worth all the verses he had ever written.

His confidence in God kept pace with his increasing years, and his prospects of eternal happiness were never brighter, than when he was about to quit the stage of life, which is exemplified in the last lines he composed, which he dictated to Mrs. Wesley, when he could scarcely articulate:

In age and feebleness extreme,

Who shall a trembling worm redeem?

Jesus my only hope thou art:

Strength of my failing flesh and heart;

O! could I catch one smile from thee,

And drop into eternity!

The early part of his life was spent in travelling through various parts of this kingdom; but, towards the close of his life, he chiefly resided in London, where he quietly retired into Abraham's bosom, on the 29th of March, 1788, in the 80th year of his age. He had no disease, but after a gradual decay of some months, the weary wheels of life stood still.

The death of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.

This long dreaded and deeply deplored event occurred on the 2d day of March, 1791.

The Great Head of the Church had in his special providence raised up this great and truly Apostolic Man, to promote the revival and spread of vital religion in this and in other countries. He preached immortal truth with amazing simplicity, and in a style adapted to all capacities, as equally distant from vulgarity as affected refinement. His labours to do good "in season and out of season," were seldom, if ever equalled; and his career of usefulness knew no other variety than that of the "shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day!" His vigour of

intellect, according to his own account, was scarcely at all impaired by his advanced age, it only appeared to impart additional sanctity to his character and serenity to his countenance, which could not be beheld without tender veneration; * and to use the language of an eminent modern Divine (although applied to another individual is equally applicable to Mr. Wesley) "He fell like a noble tree after two or three strokes, with all his sap and verdure, with extended boughs and rich foliage, while thousands were reposing under his shadow and partaking of his fruits."

And after having continued to labour with unabated ardour and unrivalled success in the vineyard of his Divine Master, for the space of *sixty-six* years, he gloriously and triumphantly finished

* Mr. Wesley in his Journal dated 28th June, 1783, makes the following remark: "I have this day lived four score years: and by the mercy of God my eyes are not yet waxed dim, and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since, just the same I have now.

"God grant I may never live to be useless, rather may I

"My body with my charge lay down,

"And cease at once to work and live."

his course of usefulness in the *eighty-eight* year of his age. Mr. John Reynolds, who had now been with us almost two years, delivered on that solemn and affecting occasion, an excellent and appropriate sermon; to a weeping and crowded audience. During the time that Mr. R. was with us, it pleased the Lord greatly to own and bless his ministerial labours; and before he left, the congregation had increased to such an extent, that for the first time thoughts were entertained of enlarging the chapel, but our funds at that time were inadequate to carry that measure into execution.

Soon after that peaceable and prosperous state of the affairs of our Society, a spirit of discord again broke out, and produced an unhappy division among the people. The subject of dispute was respecting the propriety of the Lord's Supper being administered by the Itinerant Preachers. Part of the Trustees, Leaders, and Members strongly insisted that as Mr. Wesley was now no more, and as they could not conscientiously receive the Ordinance either in the Established Church, or among the Dissenters of any denomi-

nation, they had an undoubted right to expect the enjoyment of that privilege at the hands of their own Preachers. On the other hand, the opposite party violently contended that it was an innovation in Methodism which could not be endured. That difference of opinion grievously distracted the minds of the people, interrupted the progress of the work of God, and some who were weak and unstable wandered from the fold.

In the year 1800, Mr. Robert Smith, Sen. the Superintendent of the Circuit, died in this city. He was a man of genuine piety and of unfeigned simplicity: he had laboured twelve years in the Vineyard of the Lord. His general usefulness consisted in strengthening the weak and building up the Church of God: he endured much from an asthmatic complaint, which being united with a dropsy in the chest proved fatal. But under the greatest sufferings he maintained an unshaken confidence in the Lord; and after exulting in a "present salvation," he calmly fell asleep in Jesus.

To fill up this vacancy, Mr. Wm. Vipond was sent for a few weeks. He was a young man of extraordinary abilities and of sterling piety. His

commanding eloquence attracted the attention of people of all ranks and denominations, who listened with rapture and delight to his instructive discourses. The sermon which he delivered on the Easter Sunday of that year from 1 Cor. 15. 20. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, &c." will long be remembered by those who heard it. He also delivered a funeral oration which was much admired, occasioned by the death of Mr. James Pooley, a young man much devoted to God, and who in the capacity of a Local Preacher, was made extensively useful in this city, and many other places where he published the Gospel.

After Mr. Vipond left Norwich, he was called to the work as a regular Itinerant Preacher, and continued in the work about eleven years.

In every Circuit where he laboured, he was justly esteemed, and his efforts to do good both in public and private were rendered remarkably successful. For several months previous to his death, his sufferings were severe, but he suffered with the magnanimity of a man and the resignation of a Christian. He died in peace at Newbury, Berks, in the thirty third year of his age.

The cause of religion still continued to prosper amongst us, and peace and harmony reigned without any mixture of discord till the year 1806; when a most grievous altercation took place between the Leaders, respecting the fitness of one of the young preachers for the work of the ministry. The disputes ran to such a length, that the opposing party (among whom were many individuals of influence and respectability) resolved on a separation. This resolution was carried into effect, and they withdrew to a small Chapel in Ber-street, where they invited the Preachers belonging to the connexion which had been formed by the late Alexander Kilham.

This unhappy rent was the severest shock the Society had ever experienced, and the most melancholy consequences were apprehended; but through the merciful interposition of God, the very reverse was the case, and from that period the cause of Methodism began to prosper as it had never done before.

In the year 1807, Mr. M. Revel and Mr. M. Wilson were appointed for this Circuit. The labours of these excellent men were highly acceptable to the people and greatly owned of God.

During that and the ensuing year the Lord graciously crowned the labours of his servants with success, and the congregation so much increased, that it became indispensably necessary to erect an additional gallery, which being done, was in a very short time completely occupied.

At the Conference of 1809, Messrs. William Gilpin and William Hinson were appointed to the Norwich Circuit. They had the satisfaction of seeing the work of God prosper in their hands. The Leaders and the People were united together "as the heart of one man," all were anxious for an enlargement of the borders of their Zion, and to co-operate with the Preachers in every plan of usefulness which they might propose. The increase of the congregation was now so great, that every part of the chapel was crowded to excess, and multitudes were obliged to go away for want of room. Several schemes were suggested for the enlargement of the Chapel, but after numerous meetings of the Leaders and other respectable friends, to deliberate what measure ought to be adopted, every plan of enlargement was abandoned as impracticable, and proper steps were taken towards the erection of an entire new one, sufficiently

large and commodious to accommodate all who were desirous of hearing the Word of Life. It was then agreed that a public meeting should be held for the purpose of ascertaining what sum of money could be raised by way of subscription, towards meeting the expence of such an undertaking. Those of the friends whose circumstances would allow, came forward in a most liberal manner, and even the very poorest of the people exerted themselves to the utmost. It is a singular fact, that in a congregation of four or five hundred persons, there were but two or three individuals who threw any opposition in the way.

The building Committee, which had been appointed, were active and assiduous in their enquiries after a suitable place for a Chapel, and at length they succeeded in the purchase of an eligible plot of ground, situate in Calvert Street, in the parish of St. Saviour. The preliminary arrangements having been made, the first stone of the building was laid on the 12th day of July, 1810, by Messrs. Gilpin and Hinson, who after singing an appropriate hymn, and after having offered solemn prayer to Almighty God, severally addressed a large company who had assembled

together on the joyful occasion. And after having occupied the Chapel in Cherry-lane during the space of forty years, the Methodist Society and Congregation finally left it on the evening of Sunday, the 16th of June, when Mr. Gilpin preached a suitable sermon from John 14th chapter and 31st verse, "Arise, let us go hence." It was then sold to a small Dissenting Congregation.

The following are the names of the Preachers stationed in the Norwich Circuit, from the building of Cherry-lane until the erection of Calvert-street Chapel.

1769, John Murry and John Hastings.

1770, John Murry and George Shadford.

1771, George Shadford, John Floyd, and John Undrell.

1772, James Clough, John Pritchard, and John Broadbent.

1773. J. Clough, John Brettle, Richard Hunt and James Wood.

1774, George Hudson, Thomas Brisco, Samuel Randle, and W. Moore.

1775, Samuel Randle, Geo. Wadsworth, Geo. Hudson, John Beanland.

1776, Richard Bourke, John Watson, and Henry Robins.

1777, Joseph Pilmore, Peter Dean, and Wm. Tonney.

1778, Joseph Pilmore, Barnabas Thomas, and Robert Naylor.

1779, George Shadford, (second time) Samuel Bardsly, and John Accut.

1780, James Wood, (second time) John Moon, and Jonathan Cousins.

1781, James Wood, Wm. Horner, John Accut, and Robert Hopkins.

1782, James Hindmarsh, Thos. Cooper, Joshua Keighley, and Robert Scott.

1783, Richard Whatcoat, Josh. Thompson, Wm. Adamson, and Adam Clarke.

1784, Jonathan Cousins, Geo. Button, W. Palmer, and Jos. Jerom.

1785, Thos. Wride, T. Jones, and J. M^cKersey.

1786, Jasper Robinson, R. Empringham, T. Shaw, A. Moseley, and R. Gamble.

1787, J. Robinson, Jos. Harper, J. Cricket, C. Bland, and J. Roberts.

1788, John Pool, R. Reece, and Thos. Kelk.

1789, Thomas Tattershall, Thomas Broadbent, Thomas Rogerson, W. Green, Thomas Hutton.

1790, J. Reynolds, Sen. J. Hickling, Thomas

Jones, James Lawton,

1791, J. Reynolds, Thomas Simmonite, J. Wilshaw, and Isaac Lilly.

1792, W. Ashman and Charles Bond.

1793, Alex. Suter and Henry Anderson.

1794, Alex. Suter and Edmund Shaw.

1795, Benj. Leggatt and John Leppington.

1796, Chas. Kyte and Duncan Kay.

1797, Chas. Kyte and Francis West

1798, Jas. Anderson, Jas. Penman, and Thos. Edman.

1799, Jas. Anderson, Jas. Penman, and Francis Collier.

1800, Robt. Smith and Francis Collier.

1801, Step. Wilson and J. Cricket (second time).

1802, Wm. Moulton and Wm. Howarth.

1803, Wm. Moulton and Edward Millward.

1804, John Dean and Stephen Butler.

1805, Edward Towler and John Newton.

1806, Edward Towler and Wm. Breedon.

1807, Marmaduke Revel & Maxamilian Wilson.

1808, M. Revel, Fran. Burgess, and Isaac Bradnack.

1809, Wm. Gilpin and Wm. Hinson.

1810, Wm. Gilpin and Wm. Hinson.

*The removal of the Methodist Preachers & Society
from Cherry Lane to Calvert Street Chapel.*

On Thursday, the 20th June, 1811, the New Chapel was opened for the Worship of God. The Rev. Dr. Coke preached in the morning and evening—and the Rev. Samuel Botts in the afternoon. At an early hour immense multitudes of people from different parts of Norfolk and Suffolk, as well as hundreds of the inhabitants of this city assembled together to witness the dedication of that noble structure to the service of the Most High God. Never before did I behold a scene so interesting! Every heart glowed with gratitude and delight, and every eye beamed with happiness and joy; and many will have cause to remember to all eternity the blessings which were then and there dispensed. At each service a collection was made towards defraying the expences of its erection; and the aggregate amount far exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine.

When it was finally determined to build, and whilst the foundation of a Chapel 72 feet by 50 was seen advancing above the surface of the ground, many of our adversaries expressed their

and to the great satisfaction of the friends of the cause.

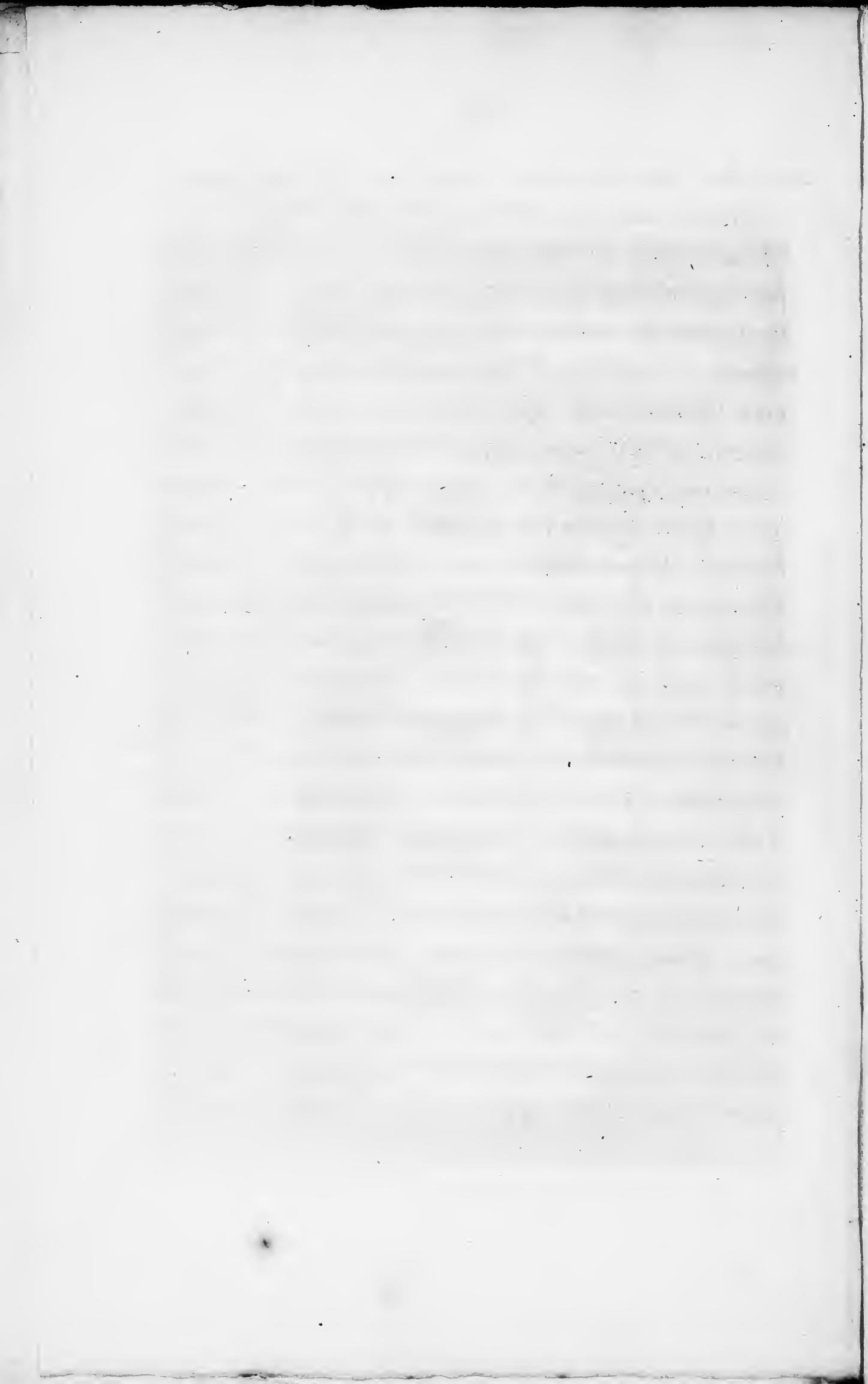
compassion for our folly, and most confidently predicted that we should never be able to raise a congregation to fill so large a place, or find money to meet the expenditure. But thanks be to that God in whom we reposed our confidence, those envious and senseless prognostications fell to the ground unaccomplished. The Chapel was soon very numerously attended by devout and sincere worshippers. The work of God revived on every hand, and many were added to the Church of Christ. Fourteen years have now elapsed since the opening of Calvert Street Chapel, during which time many that were "like sheep having no Shepherd," have been reclaimed and brought back to the "Shepherd and Bishop of Souls;" and great numbers have died in the faith of the Gospel—who ascribed their salvation (under God) to the preaching of his word in that place. When the Society left Cherry Lane, it amounted to about 250 in number, and it has now increased to upwards of 700 Members.

The Building of St. Peter's Chapel.

The work of God had for several years made a gradual but considerable progress amongst us,



J.B. Ludbrooke del:
ST PETERS WESLEYAN



and the Chapel which at first was thought much too large, was now become too small for the accommodation of all who desired to attend the worship of God and to hear the Gospel by the Methodist Preachers. In the year 1823, Mr. Wm. Gilpin was appointed a second time to the Norwich Circuit with Mr. Miles C. Dixon. In the autumn of that year, many of the leading friends began to express it as their opinion that means ought to be employed for the erection of an additional Chapel in this city, that should be equally as large as the one in Calvert-street. They urged that within the last ten or twelve years the population had greatly increased, and now amounted to not less than sixty thousand souls, and that it was well known that many thousands were destitute of the means of religious instruction. Some of the friends at the same time intimated that in case another Chapel should be built, it was their intention to contribute liberally towards its erection. Those private conversations soon became general in the families, and social meetings of the friends, till at length the Preachers and Leaders judged it expedient at least to bring the subject fairly before the Society and congregation;

and it was agreed that a public meeting should be held on the evening of New Year's Day, 1824. Accordingly a meeting was called, and when the appointed time arrived, a large congregation was assembled; and several resolutions were brought before the meeting expressive of their sense of "the necessity and practicability of Building a Second Methodist Chapel in this City." These resolutions passed with little or no opposition, and a subscription was immediately opened, when some of our more opulent friends subscribed in a most liberal manner, and our poorer friends imitated their example, and strained every nerve to accomplish an object so desirable. Before the meeting closed, the amount of the subscriptions exceeded six hundred pounds—and in a few weeks after, it amounted to between eleven and twelve hundred pounds.

This was unquestionably a noble display of true christian benevolence, and perhaps, such an one as was never surpassed in any religious society, ancient or modern, considering the circumstances of the individuals.

Their motive was not their own personal accommodation, for they had a commodious and com-

fortable place of worship: but with an ardent and disinterested zeal they sought to promote the enlargement of the kingdom of their common Lord and Saviour.

A Building Committee was then appointed, who, when the subscriptions exceeded one thousand pounds, judged it proper to proceed in the undertaking without delay. After repeated meetings and the most mature deliberation, they purchased premises in a most desirable situation in the parish of St. Peter of Mancroft,* and on Wednesday, the 14th of April, 1824, the foundation stone was laid by Messrs. W. Gilpin and M. C. Dixon, who each addressed a large assembly of friends and enemies, who had come together to witness this ceremony. When it became generally known that the Methodists had it in contemplation to build another Chapel, various conjectures were formed; some

* On the ground where this Chapel is built, formerly stood part of the Old Theatre, which when the Methodist Preachers first visited Norwich, was more than once occupied by them in Publishing the Gospel of Christ, when a better place could not be procured. It is remarkable, after the lapse of so many years, the same body of people should have taken possession of the same place as their own.

said it was the result of a serious quarrel in the congregation at Calvert Street, others said that the Ministers were each about to set up for himself, and many were utterly at a loss to divine what could influence us to select a part of the town that had always been considered as free from Methodism.

This Chapel which is called "St. Peter's Wesleyan Chapel," was ready for opening about the middle of October, and public notice was given that two days, Thursday, the 21st, and Sunday, the 24th, would be employed in its dedication to the service of God—and that both Chapels would be occupied on those days. The ministers who were engaged to officiate on this interesting occasion, were the Rev. R. Newton, (then President of the Conference) who preached the first sermon at St. Peter's on the Thursday morning, and again at Calvert Street the same evening; the Rev. John Anderson, the Rev. A. E. Farrar, and the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, assisted on the occasion. Collections were made after each service—when the liberality of the public bore ample testimony of their approval of the Preachers and the Cause.

The whole of the contributions on this occasion amounted to nearly 250*l*.

Twelve months have now elapsed since the opening of St. Peter's Chapel, during which period hundreds have heard the glad sound of the Gospel, who never heard it before—and many have been made partakers of the saving knowledge of divine truth.

The cause of Methodism in this city now assumes an important aspect: it is no longer hid in obscurity and held in contempt, which has been its fate for many years, and the foolish and ignorant prejudices of the public cease to operate as they formerly did. Now not less than two thousand people statedly hear Methodist Preaching every Sabbath day; and there is the most cheering prospect of increasing good being done in the name of the Lord.

Since the Methodist Society began so zealously and so successfully to exert itself with a view to promote the revival and spread of true religion in this place, Christians of other denominations have been excited to follow the laudable example. Several places of worship have been recently erected, others enlarged, Sunday Schools estab-

lished, and even some of our Churches have had their doors opened for Divine Service on the Sabbath-day evening. The moral condition of all ranks of its inhabitants is evidently improved; and there is good reason to believe that the period is not far distant when Norwich shall become "a praise in the earth," and the dawnings of that day we hail with joy, with gratitude, and with hope!

Thus have we taken a retrospective view of Methodism in this city from its infancy to its present flourishing condition.

We have looked back at a period when individuals of all ranks united in their efforts to crush the Methodists, yet they still subsist, and may be numbered by thousands. We have looked back to a period when its votaries were the unhappy victims of persecution and calamity; to a period when they had to wade through rivers of odium and seas of infamy; yet the bush of Moses, surrounded with flames, has always burned, and still continues to burn without being consumed; thanks be unto God those days are past, and we trust never to return. We have seen Methodism in the city of Norwich immerge from the

lowest state of obscurity to a point of exaltation, which its preceding annals have never been able to exhibit; and we have beheld with admiration and delight, its rapid strides "through evil report and through good report."

We have also presented a catalogue of Worthy Men of God, their actions, their characters, "their exits and their entrances." And from so interesting a retrospect we cannot be at a loss to perceive, that notwithstanding the schemes of the Infidel, and the efforts of the irreligious, *it is God alone that governs the universe.*

And in conclusion, we cannot but adopt the following language as strikingly applicable to the progress of Methodism in this City.

"When he first the work begun,
Small and feeble was his day;
Now the Word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way;
More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail;
Sin's strong holds it now o'er throws,
Shakes the trembling gates of Hell.

"Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand?

Now it spreads along the skies,
 Hangs o'er all the thirsty land;
 Lo! the promise of a shower,
 Drops already from above;
 But the Lord will shortly pour
 All the spirit of his love."

WESLEY.

Names of the Preachers stationed in the Norwich Circuit from the opening of Calvert-street Chapel to the present time.

- 1811, Michael Emmett and Corbet Cook.
- 1812, Michael Emmett and James Bromley.
- 1813, Robert Wheeler and James Bromley.
- 1814, Robert Wheeler and John Anderson.
- 1815, John Reynolds, Sen. and John Bicknell.
- 1816, John Reynolds and John Bicknell.
- 1817, Barnard Slater and Joshua Bryan.
- 1818, Barnard Slater and Thomas Newton.
- 1819, Barnard Slater and John Cullen.
- 1820, William Moulton and John Cullen.
- 1821, William Moulton and William Stones.
- 1822, William Moulton and William Stones.
- 1823, William Gilpin and Myles C. Dixon.
- 1824, Wm. Gilpin, M. C. Dixon, & G. Robinson.
- 1825, Wm. Gilpin, Samuel Hope, and Charles Cheetham.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS

To the Junior Members of the Society.

It is to me a subject of great rejoicing, that although God has long since called the first race of Methodists to give an account of their stewardship; although he has removed the second to a better world; and although he is fast hastening the third to the "place appointed for all living," he is in his infinite mercy raising up a blessed company of more than double the number of young men to fill up their stations in the Church of Christ.

You have seen from the foregoing sketch what has been the lot of your predecessors: their calamities were great, but their faith was strong and vigorous; they fled to Jesus in every time of trial, and they prayed with the Psalmist "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee; yea in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until all these calamities be overpast." Go thou and do likewise.

It is however your happiness to live in better days, your prospects are of a brighter kind; persecution has long ceased, and scandal and reproach have in a great measure subsided, and you can

quietly “sit under your own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make you afraid.” This is indeed a great blessing; but whilst you thus live in the blaze of Gospel day, and have experienced some dawnings of grace, some meltings of heart, be careful that you fall not into a lukewarm state, like the Laodicean Church, thinking yourselves rich when you are poor. To avoid this, imitate those who have gone before you; imitate them in their labour of love; imitate them in their attendance on the Ordinances of God’s House, for no persecution however severe, no calamity however acute, could prevent them from assembling themselves together: and as they felt the love of Christ in their own souls, it filled them with an ardent desire for the salvation of all around, and they availed themselves of every opportunity of instructing their neighbours in the way of everlasting life. Let no one therefore discourage you from doing all the good that your hands find to do, and that “with all your might.”

But let me recommend to you, not a mere observance of rites and duties, but that religion that touches the heart; that sweet piety, a heart united to God by an application of the Saviour’s atoning blood. And as you, my friends, are called to be

“a peculiar people,” be “zealous of good works;” be not ashamed of the peculiarities of your calling, for the path to Heaven is the same now as it was in the beginning, which our Lord himself declared to be a “narrow path:” attempt not therefore to make it wider, otherwise there is great danger of your making “shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.”

In your voyage through life, expect not to reach the haven without a storm; for no stage of life, whether of youth or of age, riches or poverty, grandeur or meanness, is exempt from troubles and difficulties, for “in the world ye shall have tribulation,” is the declaration of Him who cannot lie; but my friends, for our consolation he has added “be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” If then you wish to weather the storm, take Christ for your Pilot; endeavour to steer a steady course through prosperity and adversity, and as sure as God is more powerful than the World, and Christ more powerful than Satan, you will at last obtain the wished-for Harbour!

If therefore you be decided in your views, shun not the Cross, for there is a great deal of truth in that old saying of the pious William

Penn * "No Cross, no Crown!" And Deity himself when "he became flesh and dwelt among us," declared "if any man be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." Seek not therefore worldly gratification and indulgence, for true happiness is not to be found there; but rise above them, make a noble sacrifice of them, and seek a purer element to breathe in; have Christ in your hearts, and be ye clothed with the "Sun of Righteousness:" rest not satisfied until you awake in his likeness, and your "life is hid with Christ in God." This and this alone will distinguish you from men of the world, and make you truly happy amidst the ruins of the fall.

Allow not men of the world to beguile you by their vain sophistry; they will tell you, perhaps, there is no happiness in Religion, but hear the sentiment of an eminent Poet, confirmed by the experience of every pious man.

Religion! what treasure untold,
Resides in that Heavenly word!
More precious than silver or gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.

COWPER.

* He was the first proprietor of the province of Pensylvania, and afterwards founded Philadelphia.

And as you see the pious of every denomination exerting themselves in disseminating the "unsearchable riches of Christ" in the dark parts of the earth, be not behind them in this act of charity: although your pecuniary circumstances may prevent many of you from doing much for this great cause, let me intreat you to increase the fervour of your prayers; pray that the time may speedily arrive when the earth shall overflow and the universe be filled with the glory of the Lord; recollecting that the "effectual fervent prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much." Let me therefore encourage you to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Probably this Address will be read by many, who, in the spring time of life have a desire to seek "the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness;" to such I would say rest not here, this is a good beginning, but endeavour to "go on to perfection;" let the privileges held out to you by your Preachers from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from year to year, be yours by personal enjoyment. Seek a knowledge of the forgiveness of your sins

in this world, and a glorious hope of meeting those who have gone before you in another. This and this alone will lay the foundation for that "Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

Let the Freethinker tell you this is fanaticism, or the Formal Professor that this is not to be expected in these days; follow the footsteps of your predecessors, believe it, and rejoice in the belief of it, and beware of those "blind leaders of the blind," who having a form of godliness deny the power thereof. Be familiar with your Bibles, and follow the example of the noble Bereans: "Search the Scriptures daily whether these things are so." "View," says Mr. Fletcher, "in that faithful mirror, the picture both of the natural and of the regenerate man, and ask thy conscience which thou resemblest most."

Thus urge your way "through honour and through dishonour," amidst the arrows of contempt and the brands of calumny, until you exchange the "Sword of the Spirit" for a "Golden Harp," and your daily Cross for an Immortal Crown. For

The storms of wintry time will quickly pass
And one unbounded spring encircle all!

THOMSON.

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING AN EPITOME

OF THE

Doctrines and Discipline of Methodism.

As it respects the leading doctrines which are believed and taught by the Methodists, they are the same with those contained in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church of England, and with a few exceptions, the same as those which are held by the Orthodox Reformed Churches of Europe. They maintain, that in consequence of the original transgression of our first Parents, the whole posterity of Adam are morally depraved, are fallen under the displeasure of God, and are become subject to disease, misery, and death; and that all mankind are naturally inclined to that which is evil, and averse to that which is good. That our Lord Jesus Christ is truly and properly God; who in the fulness of time became incarnate, and by his sufferings and death made a full and perfect atonement for the sins of all mankind. That there are three distinct persons in the Glorious Trinity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Ghost; that these three are one in Essence and equal in Glory, and in all the attributes and perfections which inhere in God. That Man is justified before God, by Faith alone, through the merit and mediation of Christ; and not by the merit of his own good works. That the regeneration of human nature is accomplished by the sacred agency of the Holy Spirit. That it is the common and universal privilege of all Christian Believers to enjoy the constant, clear, and direct Witness of the Spirit of God in their hearts, that they are the Children of God. That every Man must be made Holy in heart and life; must be Sanctified wholly and be perfected in the Love of God, in order to be saved everlastingly. That it is possible for the Regenerate to fall finally from the highest state of Grace, and to perish for ever. That there will be a general Resurrection of the Dead, of the just and the unjust; and that both the Rewards of the Righteous, and the Punishments of the Wicked, will be perpetual and without end.

OF THE
CHURCH DISCIPLINE
 OF THE
METHODISTS.

The limits which I have prescribed to myself, will not allow me the minuteness of detail, nor permit the introduction of any arguments in vindication of that system of Church Government adopted by the Wesleyan Methodists, I must therefore satisfy myself with a mere outline of its several branches.

The annual appointment of the Itinerant Preachers is determined entirely by the Conference; and they are stationed for one or two, but never, according to the existing rules, for more than three years in the same Circuit. The whole Connexion is divided into Districts, Circuits, Societies, and Classes. Each Society contains one or more Classes, and each Class contains from about ten to thirty Members, one of whom is appointed the Leader, who meets the Class once every week, at a convenient time and place. He

opens the meeting with singing and prayer, makes enquiry of the members concerning their religious experience, receives the weekly contributions for the support of the cause, and closes with singing and prayer. In every Society one or two proper persons are chosen as Society Stewards, who receive all the sums which are collected in the Classes and Congregations, discharge all expences, and keep regular accounts of the same. In every Society where there are two or more Leaders, they meet the Preacher and Stewards once a week, or once a fortnight, and at these meetings all the affairs of the Society are transacted; Leaders and Stewards are chosen, Members admitted or rejected, &c. Once every quarter of a year the Preachers and the Stewards of each Society meet together, when all the monies raised during the preceding quarter are paid into the hands of the Circuit Stewards, who defray all the expences of the Circuit.

Besides the Itinerant Preachers, there is a respectable and highly useful body of men belonging to the Methodists, called Local Preachers, who have greatly contributed towards the spread of the Knowledge of God, especially in country

villages. Of these, with the Travelling Preachers, there is a meeting every quarter in each Circuit, when the moral and religious character of each individual is strictly examined, and the regular supply of Preaching on the Sabbath days in the different Congregations belonging to the Circuit for the ensuing quarter is determined. From among the Local Preachers are selected young men suitable for the Itinerant Work, who, after they have received the approval of the Quarterly and District Meetings, are recommended to the Conference as proper Candidates for the Christian Ministry.

For a more comprehensive and detailed account of the Methodist Discipline see the five vols. of the Minutes of the Conference, Rules of the Society, &c,

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

In conclusion, I subjoin a concise view of the establishment and present state of the Sunday Schools connected with the Methodist Society in this city. In the year 1808, when Mr. M. Revell was stationed in the Norwich Circuit, that excellent man formed our first Sunday School, which consisted of a few poor children, who were taught to read God's Holy Word, by two or three pious individuals on the mornings and afternoons of the Sabbath days. For some time the School continued in a feeble state and made but small progress, till the year 1811, when several active and zealous young men engaged themselves as Managers and Teachers, and from that period every year has witnessed its increase and prosperity. In the year 1822, a branch of the same School was established at New Catton; and in the same year another at Heigham, and in the year 1824, another in the parish of St. Peter's.

These four Schools now contain about 476 children of both sexes, which are under the management and direction of a Committee, Superintendents, and 93 Teachers, who, without any pecuniary re-

muneration, devote a large portion of their time and attention, with a view to promote the spiritual and eternal interests of the children committed to their charge. The expences of conducting the Schools are defrayed by the private subscriptions of a few benevolent Friends, and by a Public Annual Collection made in the Chapels.

FINIS.

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